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AUTHOR Jansen, Udo H.; Fedji, Cheryl
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ABSTRACT

Questionnaires were sent to 208 randomly selected, home economics department chairpersons within the North Central Accrediting Region, in order to determine the perceived effectiveness of certain articulation techniques employed by two-year college home economics staff and to ascertain the types of programs offered and what students are attracted to these programs. Of 130 respondents, 64 indicated no home economics program at their institution. Information from remaining respondents on particular methods used in establishing articulative relationships among secondary schools and two- and four-year colleges, on perceived effectiveness of those methods, and on student demography indicated: (1) all institutions offered several types of programs, with current emphasis on transfer and occupational types; (2) there was a definite relationship between enrollees' ages and type of program offered (occupational and transfer programs attracted more younger than older students at a ratio of two to one); (3) articulation efforts between institutions were deemed minimally adequate; (4) neither techniques, agencies nor particular individuals responsible for articulation were effective; (5) articulation of program goals, course content, and requirements was minimally adequate; and (6) there was great concern in occupational programs about graduates receiving low salaries while enrollments continue to increase. (TR)

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ARTICULATION OF HOME ECONOMICS PROGRAMS:

HOW EFFECTIVE ARE OUR EFFORTS?

by

Udo H. Jansen

and

Cheryl Fedji

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The continued increase in two-year college enrollments during the time when senior institutions have experienced a leveling off or in some instances a drop, has been a source of both joy and frustration for senior colleges. Whereas students transferring from one of our 1200-plus junior/community colleges have helped somewhat to alleviate the pains of decreasing numbers of "native" freshman, certain adjustments had to be made in order to accomodate those transferees. Modifications can be noted in policies governing financial aids, scholarships, dormitory space, registration and orientation procedures. In one very important realm however - program articulation - needed responses have been much slower.

A small but growing number of efforts at articulation appear to hold promise. One of the more recent synopses of such efforts (Wattenberger and Medford, 1974) points to the state-wide efforts of Florida, Texas, Georgia and Pennsylvania and to the policy-making reports from such groups as the Joint Committee of Junior and Senior Colleges (1965) as models. The authors hasten to say, however, that "only about half a dozen states have developed some type of articulation policy." (also Kintzer, 1970, 1976). The majority of states currently have such large numbers of transferring students that the need for a more organized and concerted state-wide effort of articulation has become critical. (Wattenberger and Medford; Darnes, 1970 Menasker, 1975). Having each department deal with each transfer student on an individual basis seems on the surface a worthy goal; the fact remains, however, that when policies differ from department to department, from college to college, the student meets with inconsistency, typically impeding his academic mobility and hindering his access to and

progress in, higher education.

The efforts of the aforementioned, crusading states are commendable and should be considered carefully by future articulation groups. Efforts must continue to bring about agreements on such sticky topics as acceptance of D grades, credit by examination, course equivalents, numbers of credit hours for given courses, and the like. The real key to the solution, however, may reside within these two statements:

- 1) "Many (senior college) faculty question the ability of the community college to provide quality education." (Wattenberger and Medford, 1974)
- 2) "Curriculum planning . . . must involve departmental chairmen and faculty at all institutions so that all involved are reasonably content." (Nelson, 1972)

According to these authors, the solution lies with the instructors. The quality of the process indeed is less challenged today as in past years, yet 2-year college graduates are still stereotyped by some senior college instructors. "Their backgrounds are weak, coming from any of those schools." Reports of national, regional and statewide studies (Hills, 1965; Knoell and Medsker, 1965; Simonds, 1971; Kintzer, 1970; Ogilvie, 1971) don't always reach the ear of the four-year college or university professor. Hence four-year and university faculty often operate on rumors, half-truths, or at best, misconceptions about the products of the two-year college.

The second of the statements above (Nelson) hints at a somewhat different, if yet not fully explored, remedy: a personal and professional exchange of ideas among instructors of similar/identical courses at the various campuses throughout a state or region. (One of your authors - Jansen - has had the experience of being a part of such ventures during the days of "voluntary articulation" in Nebraska in the early 1970's. The results were most gratifying to the participants - university, four-year college, and two-year institution staff.) At the base of this pro-

posed solution is a willingness to look at expected programmatic and course outcomes; i.e., skills and knowledges, as well as an exchange of ideas regarding instructional settings and strategies employed to foster student attainment.

At this particular time, only one content area has taken any steps toward possible solutions to the articulation problem (American Accounting Association, 1972). The various disciplines seem content to await the outcome of 1202 commission efforts, the newer state coordinating agencies, or the less publicized attempts of individual colleges. Yet commitment by departments and their faculty may well provide a better solution than mere compliance to statewide or institutional policy. To this end, the study reported here is addressed to the question of how one discipline - home economics - attacked the problem of articulation.

T H E P R O B L E M

The major purpose of this investigation was to determine the perceived effectiveness of certain techniques of articulation employed by two- year college home economics staff. Specifically, data were gathered from departmental chairmen pertinent to 1) the particular methods employed to establish articulative relationships among secondary schools, two-year colleges, and four-year institutions, and 2) perceived effectiveness of those various techniques typically employed. A second purpose of the study was to ascertain the types of programs being offered and which students seemed attracted to these programs. Demographic data were requested in the a) identification of home economics programs offered, b) the age range of students enrolled, and c) trends in program development.

PROCEDURES

A survey instrument was designed and piloted a) in several doctoral level research design classes, b) with State Department of Education officials, and c) with faculty in both the College of Home Economics and in Teachers' College at the University of Nebraska. Subsequent to each piloting, the instrument was modified accordingly. Copies were mailed to the chairperson of home economics departments at 208 randomly selected two-year colleges within the North Central Accrediting Region. Returns came from 130 colleges; 64 indicated they offered no home economics programs, thereby leaving 66 usable returns as baseline data for analysis.

FINDINGS

Demographic Data. Among the four basic types of home economics programs in two-year colleges, the most frequently found was the occupational home economics program (43 colleges). The second most popular was the transfer program, with 37 institutions offering. Following were the community service program (36 colleges) and consumer homemaking (27 colleges). All reporting institutions offered more than one program. One very definite and interesting trend was discerned when viewing the data: the greater the number of students enrolled in home economics at a given institution, the more likely consumer homemaking was among the types of programs available.

The occupational and transfer programs attracted a much higher ratio (2:1) of the younger, or typical freshman/sophomore student. In the 100+ courses identified in the total scope of offerings, seventy-five different courses were identified as having predominantly younger (under 21) students in attendance, whereas 25 courses attracted the "older" (21 or over) student. These age differentials seemed directly attributable to the type of

programs offered; i.e., where community service programs were in evidence, the mean age of students was significantly older than where transfer of occupational home economics programs prevailed.

Articulation. The chairperson of each home economics department was asked to identify and rate the effectiveness of various methods commonly employed to bring about a measure of articulation. Responses were given in the form of a 5-point Likert scale, as follows: 5 = exceedingly adequate; 4 = good; 3 = adequate; 2 = poor; 1 = inadequate; and 0 = not applicable.

Only two techniques (Table I) received a high enough mean rating to be considered adequate, those being a) the informal efforts among the individual instructors (3.2 mean), and b) occasional workshops (3.1 mean). Statewide groups, whether of the coordinating type or those associated with such agencies as the State Department of Education, received the lowest ratings. When taking into account all the techniques/procedures suggested (as well as any offered in the additional "open" spaces provided in the instrument), the overall mean failed to reach the 3.0 needed for a minimally adequate rating.

Chairmen were also asked to record their perceptions (Table II) concerning the extent to which articulation attempts with a) secondary schools, b) other two-year colleges, and c) four-year institutions and universities were successful.

TABLE I

EFFECTIVENESS RATINGS AND MEAN SCORES OF VARIOUS
TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED, AND AGENCIES INVOLVED, IN ARTICULATION

Techniques/ Agencies	Number of Persons Indicating a Given Rating						
	Rating						Mean Rating
	5	4	3	2	1	0	
Individual Teachers	9	15	13	7	3	3	3.2
Occasional Workshops	6	15	15	13	3	1	3.1
Conferences	6	20	13	9	4	1	2.9
Department Chairperson	6	13	17	2	1	10	2.8
Inter-campus visits	4	10	19	8	10	2	2.7
Newsletters	3	9	19	9	6	4	2.7
Departmental Meetings	5	7	18	11	6	6	2.5
State Department of Education	2	10	14	16	6	5	2.5
State Level Home Ec. Education Committee	3	11	12	15	6	6	2.5
State Coordinating Body	3	8	14	7	6	8	2.4

TABLE II

NUMBER OF CHAIRMEN IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES REPORTING DEGREE OF EFFECTIVENESS OF ARTICULATION WITH SECONDARY SCHOOLS, WITH OTHER TWO-YEAR COLLEGES, AND WITH FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS.

Effectiveness Rating	<u>Types of Institutions</u>			Total
	Secondary Schools	Other Two-Year Institutions	Four-Year Institutions	
5	7	8	5	20
4	14	16	17	47
3	14	13	14	41
2	11	9	10	30
1	10	9	10	29
0	0	0	0	0
Mean Rating	3.0	3.1	3.0	

Minimally adequate ratings were given for each/all of the relationships among the two-year college, secondary schools, and four-year institutions. The 3.0 and 3.1 mean rating indicate no differences were perceived by chairmen in articulative efforts among the types of schools and colleges where home economics programs are offered and where, in theory, the need exists to design transitions which lessen the "transfer shock."

The investigators also hypothesized that a difference might exist in the effectiveness with which certain aspects of programmatic articulation typically are concerned. For instance, it may well be easier to reach agreements about the number of credit hours for a certain course than to reach accord upon the content of that course. Figures in Table III reveal the opinions expressed by chairmen on that issue.

T A B L E III

EFFECTIVENESS MEAN SCORES FOR ARTICULATIVE EFFORTS OF PROGRAMMATIC ELEMENTS BETWEEN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES AND A) PUBLIC SCHOOLS, B) FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES, AND C) AMONG TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

Variables	Types of Institutions		
	Secondary Schools	Other Two-Year Institutions	Four-Year Institutions
	Mean	Mean	Mean
Course Content	2.8	3.1	3.2
Goals	2.8	3.1	3.1
Transfer of Credit	2.5	3.4	3.0
Credit Hours	2.4	3.3	3.2
Requirements	2.5	3.0	3.0
Prerequisites	2.4	2.7	3.0
Program Evaluation	2.4	3.0	2.6

One finding stands out: when the specific aspects or issues of program articulation are viewed separately, articulation with secondary schools is viewed as being significantly less effective. The higher 3.4 mean for articulation among the two-year colleges suggests that communications among institutions of similar scope and purpose is perhaps more frequent and more effective.

Although transfer of credit was considered the one item where efforts among the two-year colleges had been somewhat better than minimally effective, the 3.4 mean rating could not be termed exceedingly high. The lowest effectiveness ratings were given to "Prerequisites" (2.7) and "Program Evaluation" (2.6).

When the educational preparation of faculties were analyzed, it was

interesting to note that where the Master's degree or higher was the model educational level of staff, articulation between the two-year college and the four-year institutions/universities were viewed the most effective. Conversely, in those institutions where the majority of two-year staff members were para-professionals, articulation with secondary schools was perceived as more successful. Although no data were generated on this point, one could hypothesize that a number of faculty in evening home economics programs offered by two-year colleges are employed in the secondary schools during the day. This could explain those instances of professed better articulation between the colleges and the secondary schools.

C O N C E R N S A N D T R E N D S

The respondents were afforded two "Open-ended" questions: 1) what are the major concerns, and 2) what are the most promising trends in home economics programs offered in two-year colleges.

Concerns listed by chairmen, by frequency of mention were a) transfer of credit, b) traditionally low pay for graduates of occupational home economics programs, c) "territorial imperatives" - courses taught in other departments which proselyte subject matter considered the purview of home economics.

In tabulating the promising trends mentioned by respondents, the growth of occupational home economics programs received highest mention - somewhat antithetical to the expressed concern about pay scales for graduates of the programs. Second mention was the trend of increased enrollments in all four of the listed home economics programs. The trend in growth of child care programs and in parenting education programs tied for the third most frequently mentioned promising trend.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The data provided by chairmen of home economics departments in 66 junior/community colleges, when tabulated, analyzed and interpreted, led the investigators to conclude:

- I. All institutions offer several types of programs in home economics, with current emphasis being on the transfer and occupational.
- II. A definite relationship exists between the mean age of enrollees and the type of programs offered.
- III. Articulation efforts, in general, are deemed minimally adequate between/among secondary schools, two-year and four-year colleges
- IV. Neither techniques, agencies nor particular individuals whose responsibilities include articulation are effective.
- V. The effectiveness with which certain aspects of the program (goals, course content, requirements, etc.) are articulated is at best minimally adequate among post-secondary institutions and less adequate with secondary schools.
- VI. The greatest concern, as well as the most promising trend, are contained in occupational home economics. On the one hand, graduates receive low salaries; on the other hand, the greatest increase in enrollments is expected in this area.

The implications of these conclusions must be viewed both as positive and negative. Certainly some bright spots were uncovered. And while it is possible that respondents "painted the most positive picture", it is impossible to ignore such findings as increased enrollments, expanding programs, "reasonable effective" articulation among two-year colleges, and others.

Conversely, it may well be disappointing to many to learn that articulation efforts among various types of schools and institutions are minimally adequate. The problem has a long history, and may well continue until strategies are designed which foster more complete understanding - and trust -

in the efforts of our colleagues at other institutions. The age-old adage that "no other staff or institution has a program as viable as ours" must be replaced by "our program is excellent, so is yours." While on the one hand "values cannot be legislated," it appears that certain states have found better solutions to such issues as articulation as a part of the efforts of state-wide coordinating bodies. Perhaps such groups are better equipped to focus upon educational policies, systems, constructs and regulations as they affect the education of students, by reason of having less affiliation with, and commitment to any given program or institution.

In summary, solutions to the problem of articulation may, as stated by one author, lie in more frequent exchanges among faculty. Those exchanges, however, must rise above that of protecting territorial turfs and attain the level of "how can the education of students be maximized." Whether faculty, chairman, deans, presidents, or even trustees can put aside loyalties to their own constituencies and their own institutions and focus solely upon students and education has yet to be proved.

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